

Homily For Tuesday of the 28th Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1

St Peter's 8:30 AM Mass - October 12, 2021

Romans 1:16-25 "As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith."

Psalms 19:1-4 "The heavens are telling the glory of God."

Luke 11:37-41 "You clean the outside of the cup but inside are full of greed and wickedness."

The Just Shall Live By Faith

Introduction

I never got to meet my paternal grandfather. He died too young of a massive heart attack. That was before my Father married my mother. My grandfather was an Anglican minister and very steeped in his faith. He was an intellectual and his sermons were known to be very detailed and thoughtfully well crafted in their theology. I'm still working on that. My father's older sister was taking care of the funeral arrangements. Over the years, he told me several times about the phone call he got from her, asking what scripture verse they should inscribe on his tombstone. Without thinking, my father replied, "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17). I've seen that tombstone in Montreal and that is, indeed, what is inscribed there.

Romans

I think we can say that we have a well established sense of justice, of what it means to be just. It has something to do with the law. It has something to do with our court system. It has something to do with right and fair treatment. Both inside the Church and without, we talk about social justice, which has a lot to do with how the poor and downtrodden are treated.

In Sacred Scripture, justice is intimately related to righteousness, or holiness. It is the essential quality of God. To be just is to be like God who gave us life. In the verse from Romans that is on that tomb, the path to being just goes through faith.

Paul's letter to Romans is a very deep dive into this relationship. We will be reading through Romans for a few days, so will have to get used to this. As his

letter begins, he already uses language that needs to be understood. It may not be as clear to us as Paul would want it to be.

For 1500 years of Christianity, fifteen centuries of understanding that our faith and our actions, our works, are two sides of the same coin when it comes to our salvation in Christ, a reform movement sought to make faith the only requirement for that salvation. In fact, in the 16th century, Martin Luther added the word 'alone' to "The just shall live by faith," to make it clear, he thought, that we can't save ourselves by our actions.

But Catholic teaching has always been that there is a close connection between faith and works, between how we worship and how we act, between what God wants to do for us and how we respond to God's invitation to be saved from sin and death.

St. Paul says that when we do not fulfill justice with God, we won't be just to our neighbour. If we do not worship God with interior piety, wickedness with others will be the result. He says that if we don't give our minds to God in proper and total worship i.e. being just towards God, then our thinking will become futile and our capacity to know the truth about God will be darkened. That's the ultimate fake news. Lack of piety and the truth about God leads to wickedness. God hands them over to their lust and impurity. Once we lose the truth about God, we lose the truth about humanity and proper behaviour. That's the real source of wickedness.

We are in a dangerous time when many in our culture have turned away from justice towards God. There will be many opinions about what is good or bad behaviour but, if Paul is right, wickedness and greed - lack of justice towards other human beings - will follow lack of justice towards God, which is worship and piety.

Luke

This is exactly the issue that Jesus takes up with Pharisees and others time and time again. His image of a dirty cup is a prime example of his clarity on this. In every single Gospel passage we might study, Jesus always sees whether justice towards God is guiding peoples' behaviour towards others. Jesus always sees the

inside of the cup. peaks directly of the inside. Yet in every single Gospel passage, Jesus always sees the inside of the cup. The God who made the inside of the cup sees what we have done with the inside of our own hearts and minds, the cups that represent our lives. The Pharisees represent a commitment to superficial religion and not to justice towards God. You and I can't let that happen to us.

I know the embarrassment I feel when I realize that a wine glass I serve to a guest has spots on it. I need that healthy kind of shame when it comes to whether my worship of God is not clean. With the wine glass, I look closely at it in a bright light. In the spiritual life, I need to ask our Lord for his light to shine into the places that may have grown dark. I need to sacrifice anything I find there, crucifying it on the same cross our Lord gave his life so that my life would be good and holy and just, towards God and towards others.

Psalm

If we were to retell the story of salvation from today's readings, I would do it like this: From the psalm: "The heavens are telling the glory of God." God created everything, and he saw that it was good. In that creation could be seen finite reflections of the infinite glory of God. From Romans: Man (humanity) cast his eyes down from heaven and worshipped those created things, making himself the measure of all things, forgetting to give thanks to the one who made them. And his mind and heart became darkened. From the Gospel of Luke: Jesus shed light on the hearts of all humankind, making us aware of our hypocrisies, our fake worship. He gave us himself as the perfect sign of true worship and justice.

Call to Action

How will we know when we are just cleaning the outside of the cup, going for the appearance of holiness, but leaving the inside of the cup filthy. We must aspire to be saints. Pope Francis: "The saints were not superhuman. They were people who loved God in their hearts." Let us make our faith truly just. Let everything begin with the light of Christ.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord speaks of peace to his people.*

Collect: *Stir up the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord.*

Romans: *I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. As it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith." The wrath of God is revealed against those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse for, though they knew god, they did not honour him as god or give thanks to him. Their senseless minds were darkened. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.*

Psalms: *The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*

Luke: *A Pharisee invited Jesus to dine. He was amazed to see that Jesus did not first wash before dinner. The Lord said to him, "You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? So give for alms those things that are within and everything will be clean for you."*